



Secret of the Dragon Crown

Book 6 of the Shadow Dragon Saga

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Complete summary including spoilers.

Lyrrin is being held by the Dragon King, who demands to know how she made Dracuni, focusing on replicating the process to create more unidragons.

Though Lyrrin resists, through his interrogation she deduces the markings she made on the silvernix vial used to make Dracuni must have caused the change.

The Dragon King is relentless, and when Lyrrin looks to Yensen for help, the King forces Yensen to harm himself to prove his loyalty. This act of obedience solidifies Yensen's role as Lyrrin's warden.

Lyrrin finds herself locked away in Eslinde's quarters, physically and emotionally removed from all she loves. While searching the room, Lyrrin uncovers a hidden compartment containing the crystal with the magical locking rune, and a vial of silvernix with it.

Lyrrin contemplates how the crystal has remained charged without being taken to shrines for recharging. She believes the bottled silvernix kept near it is the reason.

Back in the undercity, the siege has lasted for a week, with the population under constant threat. Riony struggles with the situation and her growing concern for Lyrrin and inability to do anything to reach her.

She and Dracuni have trouble sleeping amidst the chaos and growing worries. The dragons trapped with them underground grow hungrier and the city's supplies are dwindling. Riony is desperate to find a way to rescue Lyrrin and keep Dracuni safe.

Kess brings Riony personal items from her old home, but there's little comfort to be found. In her vulnerable state, Riony initiates a moment of intimacy with Kess. Their feelings for each other are becoming clearer, but both struggle with what it means.

Kess, still shaken by her kiss with Riony, is on her way to her scouting duties when she's approached by Niskina, who apologizes for her past behavior and acknowledges Kess's sacrifice for Riony. Kess, in turn, apologizes for her role in Niskina's father's death.

Tensions in the undercity are rising as food is rationed and trust in Niskina's leadership is questioned. Rider Jaym manages to diffuse the tension with a tale of Niskina and Kess's heroism.

Kess then heads to the mountain peak, where she has been travelling to spy on the siege. She senses Kife's purple dragon nearby again, with it having followed her to the Undercity. She speaks with it, and a bond between them deepens. Lyomir reveals his name and how he feels an inexplicable curiosity toward her, which Kess realizes is mutual.

Kess uses their bond to request a favor from Lyomir.

Riony forces her way into closed off room to confront Eslinde, who has isolated herself as she struggles with grief and mistrust after losing Lyrrin. Riony seeks Eslinde's advice on how to manage their responsibilities, given the growing complexities and her need to lead the community.

After some persuasion, Eslinde agrees to join a meeting, where Riony discusses the need to feed the dragons trapped in the undercity, and suggests retrieving cave spiders from deep underground where she once found her sword.

However, this requires passing through dangerous territory, including the revenant conglomerate's cave.

Kess arrives late to the meeting, dripping wet, and hands back Riony's dragonguard sword which was once lost in the waters deep belowground. She reveals her plan to retrieve Lyrrin and explains that she intends to travel to the capital on Lyomir to do so.

Riony wants to go too, but realizes she must stay to lead the mission to gather food for the dragons, and to keep Dracuni safe.

Aishena, Benjin, and Dashiell volunteer to go with Kess. As Kess prepares to leave, Riony understands the depths of her feelings for her, asking Kess to return safely. She gives Kess her acorn pendant which holds a single dose of silvernix.

After their departure, Riony seeks comfort from Dracuni, who suggests an idea that could help with the food problem, though one Riony won't like.

Lyrrin is brought before the Dragon King again to discuss her efforts to create more unidragons. All attempts so far have failed. When given more silvernix for additional tests, Lyrrin defies the king by smashing the vials and secretly stealing some for her own use.

The king responds violently, but Yensen intervenes, protecting Lyrrin. As she recuperates, Lyrrin secretly begins to experiment with the stolen silvernix, combining it with glass rather than crystal to make magic. It works but doesn't last long and she only has limited supplies.

Back in the undercity, Dracuni uses her flame to "heal" the creatures that make up the revenant conglomerate, reviving all their bodies into meaty corpses that can be used for dragon food. It's an exhausting process for Dracuni, and painful for Riony to see after what happened with her mother.

Vance explains Dracuni's limitations of her fire, how it is coming directly from her bloodstream and needs to be limited or she could weaken herself too much.

The group returns upstairs, where they meet the Alderkin, who reveal they've been working on a way to recharge the depleted undercity gateway. The Alderkin show they have recreated standing stones capable of harnessing Dracuni's presence to charge the gateway and magical crystals again.

This could be very useful for a lot of reasons, but most of the trapped dragons are too big to escape the siege through the gateway.

Riony worries about Kess and considers using the gateway to go after her and help save Lyrrin too. But she resolves to prioritize Dracuni's safety, realizing she can't afford to chase after Lyrrin or Kess at this time, as much as she wants to. The gateway means there are other plans they can put into action.

Kess, along with Aishena, Benjin, and Dashiell, infiltrates the capital, seeing the devastation wrought by the revenant army along the way there. A number of other dragonkeepers have fallen, and the army is immense.

On Lyomir, they evade detection flying into the capital and make their way to the abandoned Zarram dragonhold to plan their next steps.

The group meets with three frightened squatters. It's clear the people of the capital are unaware of the severity of the revenant army threat approaching, and aren't being protected by the Dragon King who is more interested in capturing Dracuni.

Kess and her team try to warn the people, telling them to hide when the revenants arrive, but worry there's little they can do against the oncoming undead forces.

Lyrrin, desperate to escape from the palace, uses the lock rune to secure Eslinde's room from the guards trying to reach her and cuts through the wall with glass magic. However, her escape is slowed by getting lost in the unfamiliar palace. She hides in a garden but is spotted by a shadowy figure from a nearby clock tower.

Lyrrin then encounters Lady Hjelzahn, who seems compelled to kill Lyrrin due to her dragon heir blood.

They discuss the motivations behind Hjelzahn's killing spree, with Lyrrin trying to reason with her about the shadow dragon's influence over her. Hjelzahn decides to kill her anyway. Lyrrin is stabbed through, but Lady Hjelzahn is interrupted when Yensen and guards arrive, driving her away before she can finish Lyrrin off.

Yensen recaptures Lyrrin and takes her to the palace's silvernix supply room, where she receives the healing treatment. Yensen discusses his frustrations with the king's lack of action on Lady Hjelzahn's killings, despite him knowing she's the cause of many heirs' deaths.

The king arrives and explains his indifference to Lady Hjelzahn's attacks, revealing she has been useful in removing threats to his rule—even his own children.

Lyrrin observes the room where a small amount of silvernix is kept on hand for use. There are gruesome trophies of unicorn skeletons and Alderkin objects, including a broken gateway framed around the shelves holding the silvernix.

Later, Lyrrin presses Yensen about the King's true intentions, as she worries about the King's selfish motives, but Yensen argues he's working for the greater good.

Lyrrin is moved to a new cell, and the torturer arrives to make her more compliant.

Kess, Griskin, and their team infiltrate the palace. They successfully locate Lyrrin's cell. Kess and Griskin confront the torturer, who had tortured Kess in the past too, and Kess kills him before he can harm Lyrrin.

On their way out they are soon confronted by a large group of grayglim guards, including Yensen. As they fight their way out, Griskin is gravely injured. Kess uses the silvernix given to her by Riony to heal him.

Lyrrin urges Yensen to turn against the other guards, believing he can change, and he finally sacrifices himself to help them escape.

Kess's team, aided by Yensen and Lyrrin's use of glass magic to create an explosion, manages to get away, but Kess is badly injured by the exploding glass and has no silvernix left. She hides her injuries from the others.

After the battle, Lyrrin reveals to them that Lady Hjelzahn is still in the palace, and Aishena decides to confront her mother.

Riony and her team go on a mission to raid a stockyard near a factory to gather food for the starving dragons.

As they attack the stockyard, Riony reflects on her new role as a leader, how all their new recruits look up to her. She uses all the skills she's learned during her trials to take down the dragonriders guarding the factory and the raid is a success.

As they finish up the job, Riony sees enslaved dragons in the factory and forms a plan to untame them. However, untaming dragons requires more of Dracuni's blood, something Riony isn't sure she can justify. But if they target factory dragons for untaming they might be able to free numbers required to weaken the shadow dragon's curse.

Aishena, determined to capture her mother, Lady Hjelzahn, leads the group to the clock tower where she's hiding. A fierce battle ensues between Aishena and Lady Hjelzahn, with the others stepping in to help. Despite their best efforts, Lady Hjelzahn is formidable, and only with the help of Benjin, who gives Lyrrin his staff and joins the fight with his mother's old swords, do they manage to weaken her.

Aishena, using a plan involving Kess's knives and her own combat skills, manages to disarm her mother, pin her down, and subdue her with morass mercy. But they are trapped in the tower as more guards approach. Kess's team barricades themselves in, trying to devise a way to escape.

Kess calls for her dragon, Lyomir, to assist, and they are saved when he pulls off the roof to reach her. They manage to climb on top and fly away.

However, as they near safety of the undercity, they witness a mutiny among the siege dragons and fear that their friends might be caught up in it. They move closer to assist and are captured by dragonriders.

Benjin, bloodied and disheveled, finds Riony within the undercity with news that Lyrrin, Kess, Aishena, Dashiell, and Lyomir are captured, and the dragonriders wish to speak with her. Riony and friends fear it's a trap to capture Dracuni, but Benjin is uncertain, having seen signs of internal conflict among the captors.

Riony, eager to rescue her friends, plans to confront the riders in person. However, the Alderkin present a safer alternative: a crystal array that creates a vision-like illusion of the outside world, allowing them to meet the riders without physically being present.

The riders, led by Dashiell's old dragonrider master, explain their mutiny against the king was driven by the revenant army's advance and the suffering of the people. They propose an alliance with Riony and the dragons to save the capital, and, in return, hand over the captured friends.

Riony agrees, and a tense reunion follows as her friends are brought back into the undercity.

Kess appears close to succumbing to her injuries, and Dracuni quickly heals her.

Riony reunites with Lyrrin briefly, but it is cut short by Lady Hjelzahn waking up and being a threat. After failed attempts to subdue her, Dracuni's flame finally "heals" her, breaking the shadow dragon's hold.

Lady Hjelzahn is devastated by her actions under the curse. Aishena, Benjin, and their mother retreat to discuss things privately.

With the siege ended and exits reopened by the Alderkin, Zeina heads out to gather more resistance groups. Riony seeks Kess, declaring her feelings. They have a passionate moment before Riony has to return to her family.

Days pass, and Riony returns from another mission of untaming factory dragons and joins a strategy meeting run by Lyrrin. The group discusses the Dragon King's hidden silvernix reserves, suspected it to be in Alderkin ruins beneath his private palace.

Lyrrin shares details about what she observed while captive, and they think she's made a good plan. If they can steal the King's silvernix, they would need to take less from Dracuni and weaken the king's hold on power as well. They decide to investigate, and Lyrrin is chosen to lead the mission.

The emotional tension between Riony and Kess is palpable as they haven't had time alone since Kess returned with Lyrrin. After the meeting, Eslinde suggests a sleepover with Lyrrin to continue their planning, but also to give Riony and Kess some private time.

Kess and Riony awake together and share a tender morning, talking about their feelings and love for each other. Kess, uncertain about deserving this happiness, reflects on her past mistakes. Riony reassures her, sharing deep affection and an acknowledgment of the complicated journey they've taken.

The calm, however, feels fleeting, as they prepare for upcoming battles.

Lyrrin's team (Eslinde, Aishena, Benjin, and Lady Hjelzahn) prepares to leave for the silvernix stash, saying their goodbyes to the others.

Afterwards Riony and Dracuni practice flying. Dracuni, weakened by constant use of her blood, considers the sacrifices they've made for their cause, and is determined to continue doing anything she can.

Riony and Dracuni visit Dracuni's birthplace, but Riony finds only remnants of her egg and no vial.

Then urgent news all too soon: the revenant army has reached the capital. Riony worries they're unprepared, lacking enough silvernix for the battle and unsure of their ability to defeat the unstoppable undead.

They have one other tactic planned, but it could be the end of all of them.

Riony flies Dracuni along with her team to assist the battle against the revenants. It's chaos, and Riony hangs back, knowing her priority is keeping Dracuni safe, despite wanting to join the fight.

While Kess, the Zarrams, Jaym and other riders head into combat, Riony stays back. The dragonriders are overwhelmed by flying revenants, including revenant dragons. Kess's group comes to their aid, helping turn the tide. Kess is thrilled by the battle and her connection with Lyomir, finally living her dream of being a rider in combat.

The dragons bombard the undead with dragonfire, but despite all the dragons they've recently freed, the revenants still aren't dying to fire.

The group debates their last resort plan to weaken the shadow dragon further and decide they have no other option. Riony activates the summoning rune which will draw all wild dragons to it, but before it takes effect, the Dragon King and his riders approach, not to help protect the city, but to capture Dracuni.

Lyrrin, Eslinde, Aishena, Benjin, Elumon, and Lady Hjelzahn are still on the way to the Dragon King's private palace. As they approach the capital, they spot the revenant army and realise they're out of time.

They discuss their plans to break into the private palace and what they know of its history. Lady Hjelzahn reveals her knowledge from stalking the king, which leads Lyrrin to the realization they're headed in the wrong direction.

The wild dragon summoning rune needs time to draw the dragons in, but the Dragon King is closing in, and Dracuni and the other wild dragons are mesmerized by the rune.

The group decides to keep the rune activated while trying to evade the king. Dashiell takes the rune, flying off on his tamed dragon, drawing the wild dragons (including Dracuni with Riony and Lyomir with Kess) after them in a chase.

A flying revenant knocks Kess off Lyomir and Riony dives off Dracuni to rescue her. Riony is injured in the fall but they survive. Each rider has been given a single dose of silvernix, and Kess uses hers on Riony. Riony gives Kess her dose in return so Kess can stay safe.

They share a brief but intense moment before Riony takes off again, jumping onto a nearby tamed dragon, hoping to reach Dracuni again.

Lyrrin and her team land at the palace flight deck, amidst the chaos of the battle. The queen, seeing Eslinde and the others, orders an attack by her grayglim guards. Lyrrin uses her magic and the others take down the guards. They take the queen hostage, bringing her with them.

They race through the palace, finding that the rev army has breached the city walls and are within the palace too. They eventually make their way to the silvernix room Lyrrin was healed in earlier, finding it unguarded. But with no keys to open the gate, they are stuck, and the revs are closing in.

Outside in the battle, the summoning rune has worked. A mass of wild dragons have arrived, factory dragons untamed on Riony's missions. They have the same aggression to tamed dragons Lyomir once had and are attacking all tamed dragons in the sky, removing their taming stakes.

The plan to use the wild dragons to help mass untame more dragons works, but only some riders have silvernix to heal their injured dragons.

Riony and Dracuni fly together, racing to save falling dragons with Dracuni's healing breath, but they are heavily outnumbered. Riony notices Lyomir passing by and hopes Kess is safe.

Dracuni manages to heal many untamed dragons but has weakened herself too much and falls from the sky with Riony on her.

Lyrrin uses crystals to blow the locks and within the chamber her theory is proven to be correct. The stone shelves holding silvernix and broken gateway stone are a portal to the king's full silvernix reserves.

The group travel through as revenants flood the room behind them, making return dangerous. They find themselves on the other side in a shrine filled with silvernix but surrounded by revenants. The only way to get the silvernix back to the battle in time to help is going back the way they came, through the palace full of revenants.

Lyrrin decides to send Elumon with the silvernix to help the others, even if it means risking their lives and begins to work on reactivating the gateway.

Amidst the revenant army, Dracuni is downed, and Riony continues to fight to protect her, even though she is exhausted and injured. Amidst the chaos, Riony realizes the revenants are finally dying to fire again. Bringing the wild dragons in and untaming so many more with them was enough to weaken the curse.

As she fights, Riony sees Elumon flying in with the silvernix and demands the unconscious Dracuni be treated first. The battle is relentless, with revs closing in and Riony's strength running out. Riony is swarmed and overwhelmed.

Kess has been busy rescuing survivors from the city and carrying them to higher ground. After seeing Riony and Dracuni go down, Kess rushes to them. Dracuni is revived by the silvernix but Riony can't be seen. Dracuni desperately uses her healing flame on a mass of revenants in front of her, putting them to rest.

Lyomir burns the remaining revs to create some breathing room from the army around them.

Kess realizes Riony is within that mass and the dragons help dig her out. Though she appears dead for a moment, Riony revives, weak but alive. As they rest, they're joined by Lyrrin, Eslinde, Lady Hjelzahn, Aishena, Benjin, and the queen. Riony is surprised they returned from their mission so fast and Lyrrin reveals they were in the nearby palace.

Benjin enthusiastically explains how they were blocked in by revenants, but Lyrrin learned how to use runes on the stone that forms the palace itself to burn the revs in the halls.

Riony informs Aishena she saw Dashiell and their dragon fall in the battle, and Aishena, Lady Hjelzahn, and Benjin set off after them, leaving Kess with Riony, Eslinde, and Lyrrin.

However, before Riony can rejoin Dracuni, the Dragon King swoops down and captures Dracuni with his enormous dragon. Eslinde reveals they have the queen as hostage and offer her as a trade for Dracuni.

The Dragon King, chooses to keep Dracuni over trading for his wife. His wife, refusing to believe his true nature, chases after him but is overwhelmed by the returning revs.

Vance and Viska arrive to pick up Eslinde and Lyrrin, while Kess takes Riony on Lyomir to pursue the Dragon King. They follow him over the water as he flees the battle and land entirely, taking Dracuni with him.

As Kess fights off other dragons, Riony faces off against the Dragon King on his massive dragon. She quickly realizes his ability to heal himself with his many silvernix reserves, but hopes she can outlast him. She fights fiercely despite her exhaustion.

But the Dragon King has decades of training and disarms her, and his dragon captures her, biting into her leg. Dracuni attempts to heal Riony, but while Riony is still trapped with her leg in the dragon's mouth it won't help. In desperation, Riony cuts off her leg to escape, and Dracuni heals her then.

With no weapons left, she clings to the dragon's jaw as she notices the original taming spear. Riony climbs up and pulls the spear free, and Dracuni uses her flame on the dragon to heal it, untaming it in the process and breaking the Dragon King's control over it.

Riony uses the taming spear to stab the Dragon King, and the untamed dragon throws them all off, dropping Dracuni as well. The dragon pursues the falling king, swallowing him whole.

Riony dives to save Dracuni, who is weakened again from using flames to heal.

Lyrrin watches in worry as Riony and Dracuni fall into the ocean. The battle's tides shift as more dragons join the fray, and the revs finally begin to die out for good, burned away by the combined forces of the riders and untamed dragons.

The shadow dragon, weakened, tries to raise the dead again but fails.

As the dust settles, the survivors begin emerging. Unfortunately, the city is still in ruins, and there's much work to be done in rebuilding.

Kess returns to join the others, carrying Riony on Lyomir with her. Dracuni isn't with them, and as they reunite with Lyrrin, Eslinde and the others, Riony reveals that Dracuni didn't make it.

The funeral for Dracuni is set up as a grand affair, with her body placed on a pyre, but Riony knows the truth: Dracuni is not dead. The group performs a public funeral, to solidify the story the Dracuni didn't survive, using the Alderkin's illusion magic.

They make plans to hide Dracuni, dye her scales, and trim her hair so she can live freely, without the threat of continually being hunted for what she is.

Only Riony, Kess, Lyrrin, and their closest allies know of Dracuni's survival.

As they share stories and reflect on their losses, they also celebrate the new beginnings, and Dracuni admits it was nice to see a grand tribute to her. They also realize they missed Dracuni's first birthday, leading to a quiet celebration.

The group honors those they've lost, and Riony and Kess consider their future, free from the burdens that have weighed them down for so long. Riony admits that for the first time in years, she feels like she has a future, and she wants to spend that future with Kess and their family.

Months later, Lyrrin eagerly anticipates Riony's arrival. Riony and Kess, along with Dracuni, have been traveling, reactivating the shrines and helping to restore magic to the land. The revived cities are rebuilding, with less danger from the undead, and communities are starting to thrive. Dragons that were once under control are now free to live wild.

The Alderkin have set off to find any survivors of their kind, and though the undercity remains active, it's no longer overpopulated. Even Elumon is growing, and he and Dracuni seem to be developing a special bond.

Lyrrin has invited everyone for Riony's birthday, and all friends and family come together in peace and joy, each with a meaningful gift for Riony.

After the party, Kess shares a special moment with Lyrrin, giving her the vial that made Dracuni. She explains how it's been safely kept by her and Riony since Kess found it while scouting during the siege, but now it's Lyrrin's, as she understands its significance.

Kess and Riony retreat to their private room, and share a quiet moment, Riony feels truly at peace for the first time in a long while, knowing she has a future filled with love and safety. She feels free from the constant fight for survival. Kess, too, reflects on the journey and realizes how much she's grown, knowing she's part of the world's healing, and she has found her place alongside Riony, Griskin, and their friends.

They both acknowledge how much they've accomplished together and how their relationship has become a story for the ages, their heroism being shared as a tale across the land. As they settle in for the night, Kess playfully complains about Jaym publishing stories about them, but they both know their adventure has become part of something much bigger, something legendary.



The Shadow Dragon Saga

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